1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

house, and are given *landa* to drink. At the meal in the Place of the Departed the couple are exhorted by the bridegroom's father to live together in unity and concord, and to be faithful. All night the drums roll and guests pour in to dance and drink *landa* or sing around the bride and bridegroom, the men wearing their bison-horn dancing head-dresses. Ultimately next morning the couple are made to stand on a hurdle under the eaves of the hut constructed for them, and a kinsman of the girl's father climbs on the roof and tips a pot of water over them. The boy then drags the girl into the hut, both pushed by willing hands, and the door is fastened on them and a bamboo-matting curtain hung over it. After a while they emerge, and the bride takes a ceremonial farewell of the girls of her village, and the guests disperse. Finally in the evening she is thrust into the bridal hut by her husband's younger brothers and his friends, her husband being already inside awaiting her.

In the account of the Ganjenar-Massenar wedding which follows, naturally no description can be given of the scenes in the *narma-lon* rooms of the bride's and bridegroom's fathers, to which outsiders are not admitted, or of other parts of the wedding ceremonies which I did not actually see. The bridegroom was the son of Atrami Hunga of Massenar, the younger brother of Atrami Kopa Dhurwa, a very influential headman who was decorated by the late Raja of Bastar for keeping that *pargana* quiet during the 1910 rebellion, and the bride was the daughter of Kunjami Harma, the headman of Ganjenar. When I reached the latter's house, which was about two miles from my camp at Massenar, the bridegroom and his party had arrived, and the relatives' dinner was over. The bride had gone to a tank to be bathed by her elder sister and her brother's wife; the bridegroom and his father were walking about talking to the guests and the bride's male relatives. There were not many persons present, perhaps 150 all told; a few men were beating their dancing drums, but none were wearing their bison-horn head-dresses. Around the door of the separate sleeping hut used by Kunjami Harma's daughters and other womenfolk, some thirty women were standing shoulder to shoulder, swaying to and fro and singing a choral refrain of '*Kokolin-saya*' to obscene verses sung by a laughing woman in the centre of the group. Another band of women hurled abuse at them at intervals, when the leader of each band tried to out-Billingsgate the other.

When the bride had been bathed, she emerged from the sleeping hut with a cloth wrapped over her shoulders, and was dragged into a chain of dancing and singing girls with their arms closely linked, while the bridegroom, also with a cloth over his shoulders, was pulled into another chain. These chains of girls circled and

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

as it was under its leaf-cup, they proceed to dig holes to take the four corner pillars of the house. If, as they dig, they come across white ants they move the site. They put four pillars into the holes and tie a garland of mango leaves round them. After this they proceed to build in the usual way.

At Phunder the boys put a grass 'top-knot' on the roof and a small flag, the *chelik-bairag* or Palo Pen, so that 'all might know it was a ghotul'.

Such are the main types of building; what of the decorations and the furniture? These vary greatly from place to place. They are least ornate to the north and east, most carefully imagined and executed in the west central parganas, in the typical Jhoria area.

Doors are sometimes very small, sometimes large and heavy, occasionally of light bamboo, sometimes carved as at Bandopal; sometimes there is no door at all. Often there is an arrangement for shutting the door from inside—a latch falls into a wooden hook attached to the door. But it is interesting that there is no means of shutting the house from outside: the ghotul is never locked up. It is a shrine and no one would steal from it.

As you move west across the centre of the Muria country you find more and more elaborate carving. The ghotul has stimulated artistic creation, not only in the realm of personal adornment but also in wall-painting and wood-carving. The chelik desire that their ghotul really should be 'lovely as a bison's horns'. In many of the Jhoria ghotul there are excellently carved pillars. These may be seen at Almer, Nayanar, Remawand, Amgaon, Bandopal, Malinar, Kober and elsewhere. At Almer, one of the pillars has Siddari birds at the top, another has tortoises. On the body of the pillars are carvings of the moon, boys and girls dancing the Hulki, elephants. Down the pillar there are three *pidhs*, the seats that are supposed to hold it up. At Amgaon also, each of the pillars has four of these *pidhs* 'for the roof to sit on'. At Nayanar, one of the pillars is decorated with tortoises and another has hooded snakes projecting from all four corners. In Malinar, there are carvings on all the pillars—combs beautifully fashioned, a boy with a large phallus, a realistic bow and arrow, a snake. Outside, as at Remawand, there are pillars in the fence with remarkable designs clearly illustrated in Plate LXXII. At Jhakri I saw a fine pillar ingeniously carved to make a wooden ball inside with no way of putting it in or taking it out. At Binjhe too the Sirdar had carved some good pillars and had made windows in the ghotul with serrated bars.

Phallic symbols are very common.[1] In nearly every ghotul there is somewhere the representation of the vagina, often about two feet from the ground

[1] Similar phallic symbols occur in the Juang and Bhuiya and in some Uraon dormitories. The Juang often make a row of breasts right across the main beam of the roof. So do the Kond. Hutton describes carvings of men and women 'in a condition of sexual excitement' in Naga morung.—Hutton, *Diaries*, op. cit., p. 46.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

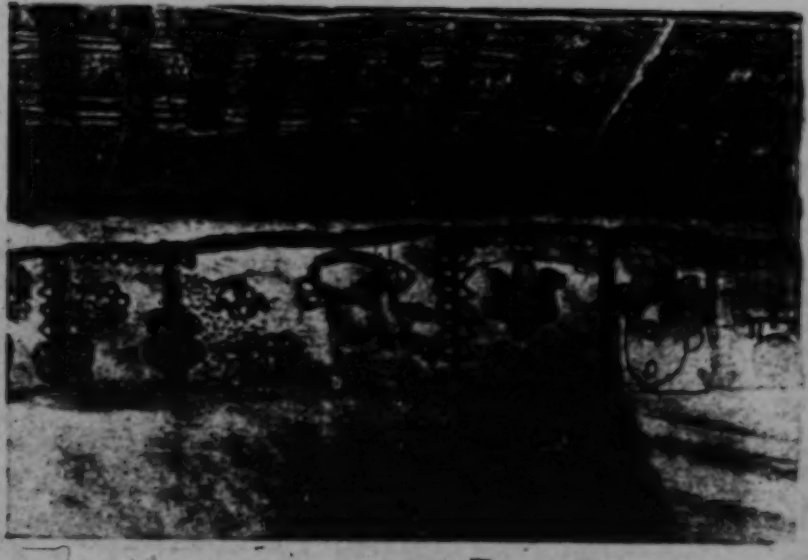
Plate LXVIII

X
883
342
417

The ghotul at Maram

Black and red wall-paintings in the More Berma ghotul

X
883
053
532



2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

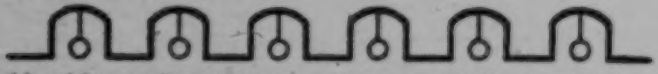
883 X
342
353
31
831

on the central pillar. In the small Kolur ghotul there is one slender pillar covered with carvings of the vagina, as always showing the clitoris, but here there was a double clitoris and a clitoris upside down.

At Markabera there were similar carvings of the vagina with the clitoris.

Often a chelik may be seen with an enormous penis, a motiari in his arms. The boys say that these carvings are very useful as an approach to girls. It may be that the vagina in the central pillar is the relic of a custom now forgotten of initiating smaller boys by pressing them against it.[1]

The walls of the ghotul are often decorated with drawings and paintings. In 1940 there was a fine display in the Remawand ghotul. The following year I saw a frieze of fantastic paintings (illustrated in Plate LXVIII) at Mote Berma. At Netagaon there were models of motiari, tigers and a monkey. In Urdabera there was a model of a chelik with his motiari, and over the door a mud model of a horse. In Deogaon, there were modellings of a chelik and motiari riding on a horse. At Kuntpadar, one wall was well decorated with drawings of a boy, a vagina, a girl, a bow and arrow and the sun and moon. At Palki there was the representation of a bird trap:



But this might equally well be a sexual symbol, similar to the design of the phallus within the vagina that I noted at Metawand.

883 X
352
[531]

The day-time visitor to a ghotul will find little enough there by way of furniture. Cots are never used; everyone sleeps on the ground. Seats and stools are rare, but in many ghotul are to be found long narrow pieces of wood raised some two inches from the ground. These are the *kutul* which may be used either as seats or pillows. Some are very long and suggest the custom of several boys and girls sleeping together. They are often carved with geometric designs, figures of boys and girls, crude representations of the vagina. I have one with four breasts carved on its under-side. Occasionally you may see a *kutul* with a little drawer hollowed out below for storing necklaces or other ornaments during the night. As far as I know these head-rests are the corporate property

FIG. 54. *Kutul* from Talabera showing small drawer for keeping ornaments. *Length 1' 7"*

[1] A remarkable parallel from an English Public School (Repton) is provided in Denton Welch's *Maiden Voyage* (London, 1943), p. 48. The author is describing the House dormitory. 'Two lips had been painted on one of the beams and all new boys had to

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

CHAPTER ELEVEN

TWO TYPES OF GHOTUL

I

BEFORE proceeding further it is essential that we distinguish carefully between two different types of ghotul, for these are so sharply differentiated by rule and custom and the psychological conditions of each are so distinct that until this is done we can get no clear picture of the intimate relations between chelik and motiari.

The fundamental principle of the first type of dormitory, which is sometimes called the *jodidár*[1] or 'yoking' ghotul, is that of fidelity to a single partner during the whole of the pre-marital period. Each chelik is paired off with a motiari; he is formally 'married' to her; she may even take the feminine form of his title as her own. Divorce is allowed, though infidelity is punished.

In the second type of ghotul, which is probably a later development of the classic model, any kind of lasting attachment between chelik and motiari is forbidden. No one can say that such and such a motiari is *his* girl; if anyone sleeps with a particular girl for more than three days at a time, he is punished.

In all other matters, whether of discipline, routine, social duty or recreation, there is no difference between the two types of ghotul. We must, however, carefully distinguish them for their sexual customs and psychological conditions.

The *jodidár* ghotul is, I think, the original form of the Muria dormitory. In the first place, it is most widely distributed in the more primitive parganas—the Chota Dongar, Dugal and Karangal—and in the neighbourhood of the Abujhmar Mountains. It has retained its place most successfully among the Jhoria, who are undoubtedly the oldest of the Muria groups. Secondly, the Muria themselves describe the other type of ghotul as a modern improvement intended to eliminate scandals and the danger of pregnancy. The change from one type to the other is still going on. At Karangaon, which was formerly

FIG. 37. Carving on the pillars of the ghotul at Almer

[1] A *jodi* or *jori* is the word used for a life-long friend, yoke-fellow or husband and wife. A *jodi* is something definitely more than a temporary lover. It is the person yoked to whom one will pull the heavy plough of life. See V. Elwin and S. Hivale, *Folk-Songs of the Maikal Hills* (Bombay, 1944), pp. 24ff.